

3 February 1983

Daily Summary of Positions on INF--Classified DevelopmentsDutch Christian Democrats Divided on INF

The Dutch NATO representative told Ambassador Bennett on Tuesday that Defense Minister de Ruiter is basically sympathetic to deployment of cruise missiles in the Netherlands. He also said that de Ruiter's fellow Christian Democrats within the cabinet are divided on the issue and that neither Foreign Minister van den Broek nor Prime Minister Lubbers will take a strong stand in favor of deployment. []

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Comment: Christian Democrats in Parliament are also badly divided on INF. Their coalition partner, the Liberal Party, is more forthrightly in favor of deployment but appears willing to let the Christian Democrats take the lead. Although the two parties have a parliamentary majority, it will take a strong stand by the Christian Democrats, and unusually strict party discipline, for the government to obtain a favorable response on INF when Lubbers eventually brings the deployment question before parliament. []

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Japanese Concern with INF Intensifies

US Embassy Tokyo reports that Foreign Ministry officials, in working level discussions on Tuesday with members of Secretary Shultz's party, emphasized that INF negotiations resulting in a transfer of Soviet SS-20 missiles from Europe to the Far East would not be acceptable to Japan. They added that Japan was worried a simple freeze on SS-20s already deployed in Siberia would not be acceptable either. The officials asked how Washington might respond if Moscow demanded reductions in US forces in and around Japan as the price for a freeze or reduction in Soviet INF missiles. Defense Agency chief Tanikawa stressed to the Secretary on Monday that Japan wants the US to adhere to NATO's deployment decision and the zero option and to approach INF talks from a global rather than a European perspective. According to Embassy Tokyo, he warned that the negotiations had the potential to weaken US ties with Japan as well as Western Europe. []

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Comment: The sophistication of the questions posed by the Japanese officials on this issue and their sense of urgency are unusual. They probably reflect concern that the United States, in response to pressure from the West Europeans, may be about to alter its position on INF in ways detrimental to Japanese security interests. The new Nakasone government, already more attuned than its predecessor to the threat posed by existing SS-20s, has recently been forcibly reminded of this problem by heavy-handed Soviet threats. []

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Moscow Still Interested in Summit

Embassy Moscow has described Andropov's comments on the question of a summit as careful and sober. They do nothing to jeopardize the prospects for such a meeting and reiterate strong Soviet interest in a summit as a channel for serious US-Soviet discourse. []

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Comment: By contrast the Soviet press is giving wide play to Andropov's rejection of President Reagan's summit proposal. By choosing to respond to the President directly and at the most authoritative level, the Soviets clearly hope to dispel any hints that they will move toward a consideration of the zero option as a result of Washington's adherence to this approach []

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